

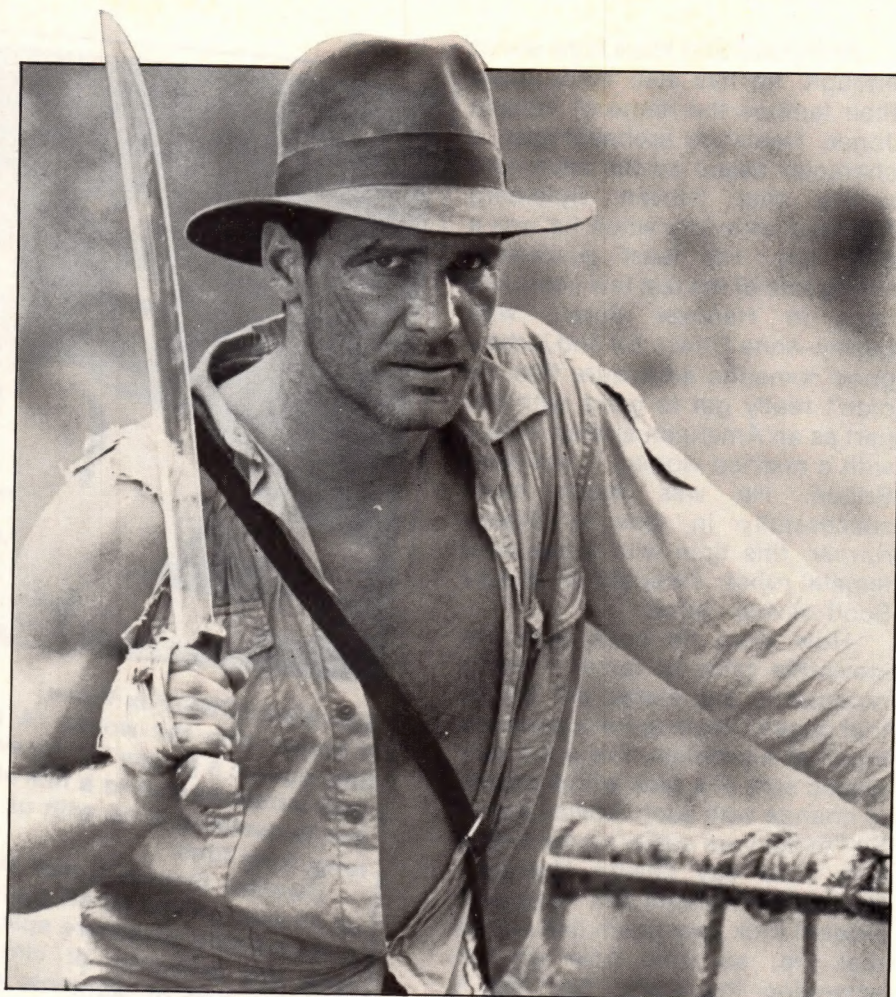
It took a long time for Harrison Ford to become a success, but now that he's there he's making the most of it.

In the late 'sixties and early 'seventies if you were living in Hollywood and wanted a carpenter, you might have well found that it was Harrison Ford who came to fit the false ceiling in the den.

Fed up with the miniscule progress of his acting career, he temporarily gave thespianism up to earn a living as a carpenter. Ford was born in Chicago in 1942 and attended the Ripon college in Wisconsin. Here he did some theatre in what they Americans call summer stock — repertory to us. In 1963 he went to Hollywood and signed on as a contract player, first with Columbia and later with Universal. In those days, when TV was still a relatively young medium, it was possible for actors to be apprenticed to studios on a contract basis. His first part was in *Dead Heat On A Merry Go-Round*, whose real star was the languid James Coburn. He made several very small appearances in films and also a lot of guesting on TV shows, such as *Ironside*, *Gunsmoke* and *The Virginian*. It was at this stage that he left the movie business and became a jobbing carpenter.

'I was going no place fast. All I was doing were bits in TV series, and I was convinced that I'd burn myself out before I had a chance to appear in any decent feature films. Apart from which, I looked far too young to be interesting. I was 24 but I photographed 19. So, for the next eight years or so I became a carpenter.'

During this time he did only three acting jobs. A small part in *The Conversation* with Gene Hackman, a role in the *Court Martial of Lieutenant Calley*, and a key role in *American Graffiti* as Bob Falfa. this was in 1973, and the low-budget *American Graffiti* was a tremendous success. The period after this was a lean one however, until the director of *Graffiti*, the now mega-famous George Lucas, cast Ford as Space buccaneer Han Solo in *Star Wars*, the blockbuster that started the revival in science fiction movies. Overnight Ford's lifestyle changed. Nobody



IF I WAS A CARPENTER

predicted the enormous success of *Star Wars*, if the producers had they might not have given him one quarter of one per cent of the gross. He earned 53,000 dollars in the first three month's of the film's release. All of a sudden he was a wealthy man.

'Not that money means all that much in my life, but suddenly having it made it possible to move into a large house in the Hollywood Hills, and to equip a large workshop on the premises where I now spend all my spare time making furniture.

'The one unfortunate thing about my success is that my thirteen-year marriage broke down. We simply grew apart and although she has custody of our two sons, we've remained as amicable as possible in the

circumstances. They don't live too far away from em and I see the boys regularly, which is great. They're pretty well adjusted and seem to be taking my success in their stride.'

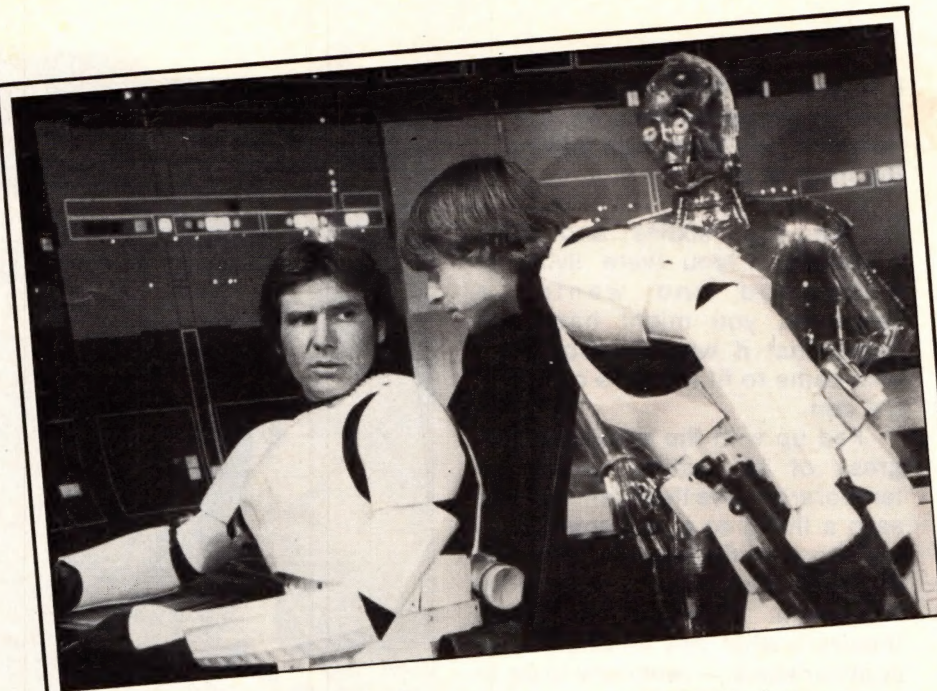
Expanding on the background to his success he says, 'My greatest pleasure is my work and the nearest thing I've got to a hobby is my carpentry. I don't go to parties and I'm not involved in the so-called Hollywood scene.' Who knows. . . he reflects, 'if I had socialised a bit more, success would have come much sooner because in Hollywood to succeed, you need to know the right people. By some irony, all the right people, such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and Francis Coppola all know me and I don't have to hustle for their attention. Which is the really nice part.'

TAPES

As if three *Star Wars* films weren't enough, he has also made more than famous the name of Indiana Jones, freelance archaeologist, a character based on the adventure serials that Steven Spielberg followed so avidly when he was a little boy. His least successful acting role of the last few years has been in *Hanover Street*, with Lesley-Anne Down. By and large a good romantic adventure film, he didn't really get to grips with the part as an American airman in love with a married woman in war-torn Britain. He was much more successfully in love in *Blade-runner*, this time with a beautiful female robot. Directed in Ridley Scott of *Alien* fame.

How does he cope with the inevitable price of fame — being recognised and stared at? 'So far that doesn't seem to have been too much of a problem. I've got a very plastic sort of a face which seems to change with each movie I make. So I'm not your easily recognisable type, like say Dustin Hoffman. However in *Raiders* and *Temple of Doom* I look very much like I do in real life, so from now on I'm expecting the worst. Not that I resent being recognised, you understand, it's just that coping with crowds isn't my sort of thing at all.

'Still, it's a small price to pay for the kind of success most actors don't even dream about. . .'



Star Wars (CBS/Fox Video) It began with the words, 'A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away'. This introduced us to a film series that is destined to be with us for a long, long time.

Director George Lucas whisks us all away to that far off galaxy for a memorable adventure epic filled with the brilliance of cinematic wizardry and of elements of the good versus evil which, after all, is what movies have always been about, even before they learned to talk.

Star Wars is a space fairy tale with that intrepid space adventurer, Luke Skywalker on a mission to save the beautiful Princess Leia from the evil clutches of the Grand

Moff and Darth Vader. Luke, with Han Solo, robots C3PO and R2D2, and the woolly Chewbacca, watched over by the powerful influence of the godly Ben Obi-Wan Kenobi, quickly established themselves in the hearts of millions. They represent our childhood fantasies.

The technical artistry, the sheer delight of its stunning cinematic imagery; the lovable robots, the whiter than white heroes, the blacker than black villains, fused together in the battle of good against evil all helped in making *Star Wars* the screen's biggest ever box-office hit. It really is the blockbuster of all blockbusters.



Hanover Street (RCA/Columbia Pictures Video) Harrison Ford stars as a young airman stationed in a bomber crew on an English air base during the second world war.

While on a trip to London he meets beautiful Lesley-Anne Down, wife of stiff upper lip and terribly decent British Army intelligence officer Christopher Plummer. They fall in

love over a cup of tea, and Ford's drawled protestations of love through gritted teeth to the accompaniment of sugary music are the worst things in the film.

It gets better when Ford and his young colleagues are sent in their B17 Bombers over Germany on daylight raids. There are some exceptionally good scenes of bombers taking off with their young crews perched inside their vulnerable turrets. Back to the story, Mr Plummer is sent into occupied France on a mission and Mr Ford volunteers to go with him. This bit of the film is very exciting. All credit to Peter Hysams (who wrote and directed *Capricorn One*) for coming up with a film that, as a romantic thriller, is a good thriller and a banal romance.

'Think of me when you have a cup of tea', indeed!

Raiders of the Lost Ark (CIC Video)
Text-book film making from Steven Spielberg in which Harrison Ford develops Clark Gable-like qualities as Indiana Jones, the archaeologist who becomes involved in a race to prevent the mystical and sacred Ark of the Covenant (said to give invincible power to its possessor), from falling into the hands of the Nazis, thus making them all-powerful to win World War II.

Aided by the splendidly chipper Karen Allen, Ford is lowered into pits full of slithering serpents, dragged behind speeding lorries, and fights battle after battle all without losing his battered trilby.

Giddyingly good entertainment which recreates the improbable excitement of Saturday morning cliffhangers, and reminds you of the sheer *fun* that used to be had from going to the movies.



Bladerunner (Warner Home Video)
It's Los Angeles in the year 2019. The ultimate status symbol is to have a live animal, or, the next best thing, a mechanical replica. Sophisticated humanoid robots, so life-like they are called 'replicants', are banned from the Earth's surface, following a bloody revolt on a colony world. Those that do make it back are shot by special units of police called 'Blade Runners'. They don't call it 'execution'. They call it 'retirement'.

Deckard is an ex-Blade Runner, hauled in by the local cops to track down four dangerous replicants who have made it back to Earth and



are looking for their creator. They want an extended life span, but then, as a cop says in the film, 'who doesn't?'

Through a city that is lit by neon signs, huge floating advertise-

ments and moving billboards, Deckard stalks his prey in the dark alleyways of Chinatown. It always seems to be raining, and everyone uses a gutter language called 'City-Speak'. But who will find who first?

Even on the small screen, this is absolutely breath-taking, with shots of the city from air cars that leave you with your mouth open. Like a 1940's detective story, it has the sprawl, the violence and the dirt of the big city under its fingernails, and though sometimes it slips into rather corny dialogue, it's a film that will stay in your mind for a long time to come, even if you don't normally watch 'science fiction'.

The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox Video) stars the original crew of heroes and villains. Harrison Ford as the space cowboy Han Solo, carrying on his juvenile romance with the cool Princess Leia — a not very regal performance from Carrie Fisher. The opening scenes set the pace for this fast-moving epic, in a tremendous battle on a frozen planet as the Imperial star-cruisers besiege the tiny but plucky rebel forces. Young Luke Skywalker, played in rather precious vein by Mark Hamill, sulks off to find Yoda, the Jedi Grand Master. Yoda turns out to be a small creature

reminiscent of a muppet. Not so surprisingly when you consider that the voice of this creature is lent by Frank Oz, who characterized Fozzie Bear in the famous Muppet series for TV.

It's a marvellous, fast-moving entertainment. The special effects are of course exemplary, but always at the same time enhance the drama rather than clouding it. Not a moment wasted, so much so that it reminds one of the classic swashbuckling entertainments of the Thirties directed by Michael Curtiz, such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Not to be missed.

